

Application Number 10/698,131
Amendment in Response to Office Action mailed December 27, 2007

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for treating urinary incontinence comprising:
applying vacuum pressure to an instrument proximate to a urethral wall of a patient to draw a portion of the urethral wall into a cavity in the instrument;
forming a hole in the portion of the urethral wall disposed in the cavity; and
implanting a bulking prosthesis through the hole proximate to a urethral sphincter,
wherein the bulking prosthesis has a partial cylinder shape with a substantially C-shaped cross section and an inner surface radius that is sized to conform to close a urethra of the patient when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis is in a miniature state at the time of implantation and assumes an enlarged state after implantation.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein
forming the hole comprises forming the hole with a needle having a lumen, and
wherein implanting the bulking prosthesis comprises pushing the bulking prosthesis through the lumen in the needle.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a hydrogel.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a material that absorbs fluid to assume the enlarged state.

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Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A system comprising:

a tubular instrument having a distal end and sized for introduction into a urethra of a patient, the distal end including a cavity;

a vacuum port to draw a portion of a urethral wall of the patient into the cavity;

a needle to make a hole through the urethral wall in the portion of the urethral wall disposed in the cavity; and

a bulking prosthesis having a partial cylinder shape with a substantially C-shaped cross-section and an inner surface radius; and

a pushing agent to push the a bulking prosthesis through the tubular instrument and through the hole in the urethral wall,

wherein the inner surface radius is sized to conform to close the urethra when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient.

Claim 7 (Original): The system of claim 6, further comprising:

a source of vacuum pressure; and

a conduit to deliver the vacuum pressure from the source to the urethral wall.

Claim 8 (Original): The system of claim 6, wherein the tubular instrument comprises the needle.

Claim 9 (Original): The system of claim 6, wherein the tubular instrument comprises a cystoscope.

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Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A device comprising:

a bulking prosthesis in the shape of a partial cylinder having a substantially C-shaped cross-section and an inner surface radius,

wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a hydrophilic polymer that forms a hydrogel in the presence of water, and

wherein the inner surface radius of the partial cylinder is sized to conform to close the urethra of a patient when the bulking prosthesis is implanted in the patient with an inner surface coaxial with the urethra of the patient and when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient.

Claim 11 (Original): The device of claim 10, wherein the bulking prosthesis has a substantially half-cylinder shape.

Claim 12 (Original): The device of claim 11, wherein the bulking prosthesis assumes one of a miniature state and an enlarged state, and the prosthesis assumes the shape of the partial cylinder in the enlarged state.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The device of claim 10, further comprising a porous material surrounding the hydrophilic polymer.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The device of claim 10, further comprising a radio-opaque material.

Claim 15 (Original): The device of claim 10, wherein the device includes a non-uniform cross-section.

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Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A method for treating urinary incontinence comprising:
applying vacuum pressure to tissue proximate a urethral sphincter of a patient; and
implanting a bulking prosthesis in the portion of the tissue proximate to the urethral
sphincter, the bulking prosthesis having a partial cylinder shape with a substantially C-shaped
cross section and an inner surface radius that is sized to conform to close a urethra of the patient,
when the patient exercises voluntary control over an external urethral sphincter of the patient,
wherein the bulking prosthesis is in a miniature state at the time of implantation and
assumes an enlarged state after implantation, and wherein the bulking prosthesis includes a long
dimension of at least two millimeters in the enlarged state.

Claims 17-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 16, wherein the bulking prosthesis
comprises a first bulking prosthesis and a second bulking prosthesis, each of the first and second
bulking prostheses comprising the a partial cylinder shape with the substantially C-shaped cross
sectionbulking prosthesis, and wherein implanting a bulking prosthesis comprises implanting the
first and second bulking prostheses in portions of the tissue proximate to the external urethral
sphincter on opposite sides of the a urethra of the patient.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 20, wherein each of the partial cylinder
bulking prostheses has ~~an~~ the inner surface radius that is sized to conform to close the urethra of
the patient when the patient exercises voluntary control over ~~an~~ the external urethral sphincter.

Claims 22-25 (Canceled).

Claim 26 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a first
bulking prosthesis and a second bulking prosthesis, each of the first and second bulking
prostheses comprising the partial cylinder shape with the substantially C-shaped cross section,
and wherein implanting comprises implanting the first and second bulking prostheses proximate
to the external urethral sphincter on opposite sides of the urethra of the patient.

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Claim 27 (New): The method of claim 26, wherein the partial cylinder shape is substantially a half cylinder shape.

Claim 28 (New): The system of claim 6, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a first bulking prosthesis and a second bulking prosthesis, each of the first and second bulking prostheses comprising the partial cylinder shape with the substantially C-shaped cross section, the first and second bulking prostheses being implantable proximate to the external urethral sphincter on opposite sides of the urethra of the patient.

Claim 29 (New): The system of claim 28, wherein the partial cylinder shape is substantially a half cylinder shape.

Claim 30 (New): The device of claim 10, wherein the bulking prosthesis comprises a first bulking prosthesis and a second bulking prosthesis, each of the first and second bulking prostheses comprising the partial cylinder shape with the substantially C-shaped cross section, the first and second bulking prostheses being implantable proximate to the external urethral sphincter on opposite sides of the urethra of the patient.

Claim 31 (New): The device of claim 30, wherein the partial cylinder shape is substantially a half cylinder shape.

Claim 32 (New): The method of claim 20, wherein the partial cylinder shape is substantially a half cylinder shape.